

Introduced by the Council President at the request of the Office of  
General Counsel and amended by the Rules Committee:

**ORDINANCE 2025-813-E**

AN ORDINANCE APPROVING, RATIFYING, AND  
AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION OF A SETTLEMENT  
AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE CITY OF JACKSONVILLE AND  
CANDICE O'CONNELL, CASE NO. 3:24-CV-419-MMH-  
MCR, UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE  
MIDDLE DISTRICT OF FLORIDA; APPROPRIATING  
\$175,000 FROM GENERAL FUND OPERATING FUND  
(OPERATING RESERVES) TO THE GENERAL FUND  
OPERATING FUND (JUDGMENTS, CLAIMS, AND LOSSES  
OVER \$50,000) TO PROVIDE FUNDING FOR  
SETTLEMENT OF PENDING LITIGATION, AS INITIATED  
BY B.T. 26-011; AUTHORIZING THE GENERAL  
COUNSEL, OR HIS DESIGNEE, TO EXECUTE THE  
SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT AND TAKE FURTHER ACTION,  
AS NECESSARY, TO EFFECTUATE THE SETTLEMENT AND  
CONCLUDE THE LITIGATION; PROVIDING AN  
EFFECTIVE DATE OF THIS ORDINANCE.

**WHEREAS,** Candice O'Connell ("O'Connell") is currently  
employed as a Rescue Captain with the Jacksonville Fire and Rescue  
Department;

**WHEREAS,** O'Connell applied and was approved to sit for a  
District Chief promotion exam in September 2022;

**WHEREAS,** O'Connell sought, as an Americans with Disabilities  
Act ("ADA") accommodation, a special make-up promotion exam due to  
an alleged disability she claimed prevented her from taking the

exam on the scheduled date;

**WHEREAS**, the City offered O'Connell numerous accommodations which O'Connell believed were insufficient and ultimately, O'Connell did not sit for the September 2022 promotion exam;

**WHEREAS**, in 2024, O'Connell sued the City and, in her most recent iteration of the complaint, alleged that the City violated the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Florida Civil Rights Act, Title VII of the federal Civil Rights Act, and the Family and Medical Leave Act by discriminating against her based on her disability and gender, retaliating against her for engaging in protected activity, and interfering with her leave approved under the Family and Medical Leave Act;

**WHEREAS**, the City by virtue of entering into a settlement agreement is not admitting wrongdoing;

**WHEREAS**, after engaging in a lengthy and thorough discovery process, the Council believes it to be in the best interest of the City and the public that this lawsuit be resolved without further litigation and litigation-related costs and expenses; now therefore

**BE IT ORDAINED** by the Council of the City of Jacksonville:

**Section 1. Recitals.** The recitals above are incorporated herein by this reference.

**Section 2. Appropriation.** For the 2025-2026 fiscal year, within the City's budget, there is hereby appropriated the indicated sum from the account listed in subsection (a) to the account listed in subsection (b):

(B.T. 26-011 is attached hereto as **Exhibit 2** and incorporated herein by this reference.)

(a) Appropriated from:

See **Exhibit 2** \$175,000

(b) Appropriated to:

See **Exhibit 2** \$175,000

(c) Explanation of Appropriation - The funding above is an appropriation from the General Fund Operating Fund (Operating Reserves) to the General Fund Operating Fund (Judgments, Claims, and Losses over \$50,000), to pay funds in settlement of the above-referenced pending litigation.

**Section 3. Approval and Ratification of Settlement Agreement.** The City Council hereby approves and ratifies the Settlement Agreement between the City of Jacksonville and Candice O'Connell in the form attached hereto as **Revised Exhibit 1**, labeled as "Revised Exhibit 1, Rev Settlement Agmt, November 17, 2025 - Rules" and incorporated herein.

**Section 4. Execution of Agreement and Further Action Authorized.** The General Counsel, or his designee, is hereby authorized to execute and deliver, for and on behalf of the City, the Settlement Agreement, and to take such further action necessary to effectuate the approved and ratified Settlement Agreement.

**Section 5. Effective Date.** This Ordinance shall become effective upon signature by the Mayor or upon becoming effective without the Mayor's signature.

Form approved:

/s/ Mary E. Staffopoulos

Office of General Counsel

Legislation Prepared By: Rita M. Mairs

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